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SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/03/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KWBG](#) [PBTS](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: KHIRBET AL-AQABAH DEVELOPING MASTER PLAN TO
FORESTALL DEMOLITION ORDERS

REF: A. JERUSALEM 650
[B](#). JERUSALEM 765
[C](#). 2003 JERUSALEM 3858

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) Summary. Al-Aqabah Mayor Haj Sami Sadiq and Tubas Governor Sami Musallam told PolOff June 24 that al-Aqabah residents intend to file a master plan with the Israeli Civil Administration to counter a GOI-proposed plan they say leaves 18 structures with demolition orders outside the village's permitted boundaries (ref A). NGOs assisting the area C village told PolOff that filing the master plan has been delayed due to complicated and expensive administrative and technical requirements imposed by the Civil Administration, but should be completed within a week. Residents fear demolitions could be carried out before the master plan application is approved. End summary.

Area C Village Faces 35 Demolition Orders

[2](#). (C) Mayor Haj Sami Sadiq and Tubas Governor Sami Musallam told PolOff June 24 that al-Aqabah residents intend to file a master plan with the Israeli Civil Administration to counter a GOI-proposed plan that they say leaves 18 structures with demolition orders outside the village's permitted boundaries. (Note: the 18 structures are among a total of 35 structures in the village that have pending demolition orders. End note.) Representatives of the U.S. NGO Rebuilding Alliance, which advocates on behalf of al-Aqabah, told PolOff that the Israeli High Court observed in a decision (ref B) that the Civil Administration is "not planning to demolish (village structures) for the time being." However, Israeli NGO Bimkom told PolOff that the court's observation is not legally binding and the GOI can legally demolish the structures at any time.

Lawyers, NGOs Helping Village Leaders, Residents File a Master Plan

[3](#). (C) The Jerusalem Legal Aid Center (JLAC), which represents the village, told PolOff June 30 that the delay in filing the proposed master plan is because of numerous administrative and technical requirements for the filing master plans with the Civil Administration. JLAC attorney Bassam Karajeh said regulatory requirements "require the budget of a state, not a village council." He cited requirements for statistical abstracts and detailed maps and noted that many requirements (such as regulations on uniformity of exterior appearance) are more appropriate for large cities than small villages. He said JLAC is working with a private contractor to meet the requirements and hopes to file o/a the week of July 7.

[4](#). (C) Mayor Sadiq urged USG intervention with the GOI to

lift the demolition orders, crediting the U.S. with saving 11 structures from similar demolition orders in November, 2003 (ref C). He estimated that 200 residents would be made homeless if the demolition orders are implemented.

WALLES